

Jermaine Winder

632 South Rogers St
Aberdeen MD 21001
443-845-9248
January 31, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Finance Committee members,

I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 0373. I have previously served my local union (IAFF 1742) for well over a decade as union officer in every position, from shop steward to vice president. In that time I have participated in four contract negotiations across two administrations with very different political ideologies. During that time I learned just how vital binding arbitration would be for effective negotiations. This guarantee is something most of the Fire Department locals in the region have but has always been out of grasp for us. The need for this bill for us is especially important due to the many layers of government involved in our negotiations. Unfortunately, because of those layers our good faith negotiations can suffer due to personal conflicts, general indifference and the size of the workload on the part of the State's representatives. I have been part of negotiations where all these things have happened and jeopardize the good faith nature we value in our negotiations with the State. Common sense additions to our contracts, such as the scope of our health and wellness physicals, cancer and hazard material screenings, approved and provided protective gear, and terms of our members promotional process all have fallen victim to the above issues. All of these measures are not only beneficial for our members but are minimal or cost neutral, and all met with opposition. Not on the merit of the addition to the contract but for one of the previously listed issues. Having the option to take our dispute to an impartial third party arbitrator allows for good faith to remain intact for both parties.

It is for these reasons I ask for your support and a favorable report, and to give the members of IAFF Local 1742 the avenue to guarantee good faith negotiations in the future, regardless of personal or political differences.

Respectfully,

Jermaine Winder

Jermaine Winder, (Former) Vice President, IAFF Local 1742